

From: biehl
To: Microsoft ATR,csfaculty@cuc.edu@inetgw
Date: 1/22/02 2:00pm
Subject: Microsoft Judgement

I glanced over the documents and what I saw made me quite pleased. Microsoft has always said it was "innovate" but it has been innovate as far as strong arming non-Microsoft companies. I love the wording that stated that Microsoft can fairly compete based on innovation -- boy, are THEY in trouble! :) ... There are a lot of companies I would consider innovative: Sun, Apple, etc... Microsoft doesn't seem to be there -- though, to be fair, they probably don't need to be. Like huge coffee companies that distribute "plain coffee" leaving the "special coffees" to smaller companies like Starbucks, Microsoft can offer "plain s/w" and leave "special s/w" to smaller companies.

Also, breaking the stranglehold on what O/S and applications can be loaded on the PC is also good. If someone wants Linux and NOT Windows, then the OEM should be able to supply that. If someone wants Netscape and NOT Internet Explorer, the OEM should be able to supply that too! Forcing everyone into the same straightjacket for only Microsoft's benefit is not good for anyone -- even Microsoft in the long run.

Still, like a big kid in the sandbox being told to "play fair", Microsoft will continue to "accidentally" toss sand at the other kids -- even those kids who help make Windows more attractive because it is viewed as "threatening" (i.e. non-Microsoft). Having a supervisor on the corner of the sandbox (i.e. a TC representative at Microsoft headquarters) would be a good step to minimize that.

Finally, my 2 cents as far as penalizing Microsoft. The settlement for Microsoft to give "billions" away of Microsoft s/w and old PC h/w to poor schools sounds good -- until you realize that that \$495 MS-Office CD costs Microsoft only \$2 to manufacture! And putting Microsoft Windows in the Education with Microsoft Software benefits Microsoft far more than the poor schools -- I bet Microsoft is wishing for "more punishment" like that! Hit them in the pocket book! Make them actually write out a check for \$2 billion and not the "fake money" they are proposing.

All in all, the judgment looks like a good thing ... Keep the Microsoft Giant from squishing the little guys!

Tony Biehl, Head of Computer Science Department, Columbia Union College